

ELECTRONIC PRIVACY INFORMATION CENTER

~~Total~~ "Terrorism" Information Awareness (TIA)

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Latest News

- **Poindexter's Recent Op-Ed Reflects Inconsistencies in Statements regarding Total Information Awareness (TIA).** On Sept. 10 John Poindexter, the former director of the Information Awareness Office at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, published an [Op-Ed](#) in the New York Times regarding the Total Information Awareness program. Poindexter's statement--and the Department of Defense's latest characterization of TIA in general--is [inconsistent](#) with earlier statements regarding the purpose and capabilities of the program. (Sept 10)
- **Name Changed. Problem Solved.** The Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency has released a [report](#) on the "Terrorism" Information Awareness Program. The name change is intended to address concerns that a massive program of public surveillance may raise privacy concerns. An [Executive Summary](#) and a [FAQ](#) is also available. (May 20)
- **Info Awareness Report Due.** The Department Defense research agency is expected to submit a report to Congress today on the Total Information Awareness program. In February Congress [suspended funding for the surveillance program](#) and required the Defense Department to describe the project's privacy implications. An EPIC lawsuit has produced [contractor documents](#) that reveal key projects on monitoring and tracking individuals in the United States.(May 20)
- **EPIC Obtains More Info on Total Info Awareness.**An [EPIC lawsuit \(pdf\)](#) has resulted in the release of additional documents about Total Information Awareness. The most recent disclosures provide more details on specific projects, including deliverables and timelines. For more information, see the updated [table of contractors](#). (April 4)
- **EPIC Obtains Contractor Documents for Defense Dept. Domestic Surveillance Project.** A [Freedom of Information Act lawsuit](#) [PDF] pursued by EPIC has led to the disclosure of 180 pages detailing the projects that were funded and rejected by the Office of Information Awareness, headed by John Poindexter.

The documents, which include the names of companies seeking Total Information Awareness (TIA) funding, as well as proposal titles, are available for download in four parts: [[Part 1: PDF, 728KB](#)] [[Part 2: PDF, 872KB](#)] [[Part 3: PDF, 688KB](#)] [[Part 4: PDF, 476KB](#)]. See EPIC's [analysis of the documents](#) and [table of contractors](#). (Feb. 27)

- The final [text](#) of the Congressional action on the Total Information Awareness project was signed into law by the President. The text extends the deadline for the Defense Department report to 90 days and restricts the implementation of the program on U.S. persons only. (Feb. 20)
- **Senate Limits Total Information Awareness System.** Senators led by Ron Wyden (D-OR) accepted [Amendment 59](#) to a spending [bill](#) that will suspend the development of the Total Information Awareness (TIA) system. Funding for development of TIA will end 60 days after the passage of the bill unless the intelligence community submits a detailed report to Congress on the privacy and civil liberties implications of the system. The amendment further requires Congressional authorization before TIA is deployed by any agency. However, exceptions in the amendment allow President Bush to approve continued funding for TIA, and the use of TIA for military operations outside the United States. (Jan. 24)
- **Computer Scientists Criticize TIA.** The US Association for Computing Machinery, a group of computer scientists and information technology professionals, [wrote](#) to the Senate Armed Services committee about TIA. The letter details the privacy and security risks inherent in the Total Information Awareness architecture and questions the technical feasibility of the vision. (Jan. 23)
- **New DoD-FBI links exposed.** In a preliminary [response](#) to Senator Grassley's (R-IA) letter seeking additional information about TIA, the Defense Department acknowledged that it was possibly developing a MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the FBI to experiment with TIA technology. Senator Grassley then [wrote](#) to Attorney General Ashcroft seeking additional information about potential links between the FBI and TIA. Senator Grassley has also introduced [SA53](#), an amendment that limits the funding of TIA for domestic intelligence purposes, into the appropriations bill. (Jan. 21)
- **Senator Feingold introduces Data-mining Moratorium Act.** Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) introduced [S. 188](#), the Data-mining Moratorium Act, which would limit the use of data mining technology by the Defense department and by the new Department of Homeland Security without Congressional approval and appropriate civil liberties protections. (Jan. 16)

Introduction

The [Total Information Awareness](#) project is part of the [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's Information Awareness Office](#). The office is headed by Admiral (retired) John Poindexter who is responsible for conceiving the project. TIA purports to capture the "information signature" of people so that the government can track potential terrorists and criminals involved in "low-intensity/low-density" forms of warfare and crime. The goal is to track individuals through collecting as much information about them as possible and using computer algorithms and human analysis to detect potential activity.

The project calls for the development of "revolutionary technology for ultra-large all-source information repositories," which would contain information from multiple sources to create a "virtual, centralized, grand database." This database would be populated by transaction data contained in current databases such as financial records, medical records, communication records, and travel records as well as new sources of information. Also fed into the database would be intelligence data.

A key component of the TIA project is to develop data-mining or knowledge discovery tools that will sort through the massive amounts of information to find patterns and associations. TIA will also develop search tools such as Project [Genoa](#), which Admiral Poindexter's former employer [Syntek Technologies](#), assisted in developing. TIA aims to fund the development of more such tools and data-mining technology to help analysts understand and even "preempt" future action.

A further crucial component is the development of biometric technology to enable the identification and tracking of individuals. DARPA has already funded its "[Human ID at a Distance](#)" program, which aims to positively identify people from a distance through technologies such as face recognition or gait recognition. A [nationwide identification system](#) would be of great assistance to such a project by providing an easy means to track individuals across multiple information sources.

DARPA's [Broad Agency Announcement 02-08](#) soliciting proposals from industry states that the initial plan is for a five year research project into these various technologies. The interim goal is to build "leave-behind prototypes with a limited number of proof-of-concept demonstrations in extremely high risk, high payoff areas." The [FBI](#) and the [Transportation](#)

[Security Administration](#) are also working on data-mining projects that will fuse commercial databases, public databases, and intelligence data and had [meetings](#) with TIA developers.

- [TIA Report to Congress](#) May 2003.
- [Congress Report Executive Summary](#) and [FAQ](#) May 2003.
- [TIA System Description](#) (PDF, 4.5 MB).
- [Poindexter's August 2002 Speech](#).
- [Booz Allen Hamilton defense contract](#), \$62 million awarded for research into Total Information Awareness project.
- [Pentagon Briefing Transcript on Surveillance System](#). November 20, 2002.
- [DARPA Technology briefings](#). August 2002 (see under "Information Awareness Office").
- [DARPA FY03 budget](#). For TIA [budget details](#) see sections on PE 0602301E, Project ST-28 and PE 0603760E, Project CCC-01, and PE 0602301E, Project ST-11.
- [DARPA Response](#) (PDF) to public scrutiny.
- [Security with Privacy](#) (PDF) – DARPA ISAT Study 2002.

News Items

- [Defense, Justice report on surveillance activities](#), *Government Executive*, May 28, 2003.
- [Domestic snooping; A change of name has not improved a bad project](#), *Charlotte Observer* Editorial, May 27, 2003.
- [Balancing Liberty, Security](#), *Washington Times*, May 26, 2003.
- [The Admiral Sees You Walking, He Knows Who You Are](#) Maureen Dowd, *New York Times*, May 25, 2003.
- [In the Aftermath of Sept. 11](#) *New York Times* Editorial, May 23, 2003.
- [Use of Data Collection Systems Is Up Sharply Following 9/11](#), *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 2003.
- [ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE; Experts Say Technology Is Widely Disseminated Inside and Outside Military](#), *New York Times*, May 21, 2003.
- [New Name of Pentagon Data Sweep Focuses on Terror](#), *New York Times*, May 21, 2003.
- [Data program must solve privacy fears, says the Pentagon](#), *Washington Times*, May 21, 2003.
- [Who's Watching the Watchers?](#), *PC World*, May 20, 2003.
- [U.S. promises limits on computer dragnet](#) *CNET News*, May 20, 2003.

- [Pentagon Details New Surveillance System](#) *Washington Post*, May 20, 2003.
- [Pentagon Defends Data Search Plan](#), *Wired News*, May 21, 2003.
- [Pentagon agency defends anti-terror data mining initiative](#), *Government Executive*, May 20, 2003.
- [Ideological foes agree: Privacy rights in danger](#) Barr & Murphy, *Atlanta Journal*, May 16, 2003.
- [Data Expert is Cautious About Misuse of Information](#). *New York Times*, March 25, 2003.
- [Security, Privacy Concerns Clash](#). *Oakland Tribune*, March 17, 2003.
- [California research center at the heart of data-mining storm](#). *Government Executive*, March 11, 2003.
- [Total Information Delusion](#). *Business 2.0*, February 3, 2003.
- [Total Information Awareness official responds to criticism](#). *Government Executive*, January 31, 2003.
- [System to aid development of data base](#). *Daily Texan*, January 31, 2003.
- [Congress Should not Prematurely Short-Circuit the Total Information Awareness Program](#). Heritage Foundation, January 28, 2003.
- [Senate Rebuffs Domestic Spy Plan](#). *Wired News*, January 23, 2003.
- [Beware of Total Information Awareness](#). Cato Institute, January 20, 2003.
- [Poindexter's Still a Technocrat, Still a Lightning Rod](#). *New York Times*, January 20, 2003.
- [Senators vow to halt 'data mining' project](#). *San Jose Mercury News*, January 17, 2003.
- [Awareness project unites left, right](#). *USA Today*, January 16, 2003.
- [Palo Alto scientist may hold keys to privacy](#). *San Mateo News*, January 6, 2003.
- [Dick Arme's warning](#). Nat Hentoff, *Washington Times*, January 6, 2003.
- [George Orwell here we come](#). *CNET*, January 6, 2003.
- [Database monitor far from a reality](#). *San Jose Mercury News*, December 26, 2002.
- [Snooping in All the Wrong Places](#). *BusinessWeek*, December 18, 2002.
- [Perspective: Tech's answer to Big Brother](#). *CNET*, December 16, 2002.
- [Critics Say Defense 'Total Information Awareness' Impractical](#). *Govexec.com*, December 12, 2002.
- [Big Brother and Another Overblown Privacy Scare](#). *National Journal*, December 10, 2002.
- [Can a massive database of information on Americans really preempt terrorist attacks?](#) *Wired*, December 2, 2002.
- [Congress on alert for civil liberties](#). *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 1, 2002.
- [The Pentagon's Total Information Awareness Project: Americans Under the Microscope?](#) CATO Institute, November 26, 2002.

- [ACLU Action Alert on Total Information Awareness.](#)
- [Really 'Big Brother': Given its potential to invade the privacy of everyone, the Total Information Awareness program should be shut down before it starts.](#) *St. Petersburg Times*, Editorial, November 24, 2002.
- [If You're Not Paranoid, You Oughta' Be.](#) *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 24, 2002.
- [In the Name of Security.](#) *New York Times*, November 23, 2002.
- [FBI's Increased Powers Under Spotlight.](#) *Financial Times*, November 21, 2002.
- [Pentagon Defends Anti-Terror Project.](#) *Associated Press*, November 21, 2002.
- [Fighting Terror By Terrifying U.S. Citizens.](#) *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 20, 2002.
- [Total Information Unawareness.](#) *Government Executive*, November 20, 2002.
- [Massive Database Dragnet Explored.](#) *San Jose Mercury News*, November 20, 2002.
- [No Orwellian Scheme Behind DARPA's Total Information Awareness System.](#) Heritage Foundation WebMemo, November 20, 2002.
- [A Snooper's Dream.](#) *New York Times*, Editorial, November 18, 2002.
- ['Big Brother' looming larger.](#) *Arizona Republic*, November 18, 2002.
- [Big Brother Goes to Washington.](#) *Newsweek*, November 18, 2002.
- [Electronic snoops will make us open books.](#) *St. Petersburg Times*, November 17, 2002.
- [Security and privacy.](#) *The Commercial Appeal* (Memphis), November 16, 2002.
- [Don't let homeland defense damage citizens' rights.](#) *Houston Chronicle*, November 15, 2002.
- [What price security?](#) *The Plain Dealer*, November 15, 2002.
- [A government without brakes?](#) *Press & Sun-Bulletin* (NY), November 15, 2002.
- [Orwell's nightmare.](#) *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), November 15, 2002.
- [Homeland bill a supersnoop's dream.](#) *Washington Times*, November 15, 2002.
- [Total Information Awareness.](#) *Washington Post*, Editorial, November 15, 2002.
- [Domestic Snooping; Bedrock Values Matter Even In These Dangerous Times.](#) *Charlotte Observer*, November 15, 2002.
- [You Are A Suspect.](#) William Safire, *New York Times*, November 14, 2002.
- [U.S. Hopes to Check Computers Globally.](#) *Washington Post*, November 12, 2002.
- [Pentagon Plans a Computer System That Would Peek at Personal Data of Americans.](#) *New York Times*, November 9, 2002.
- [Terrorist-tracking tools.](#) *National Journal*, September 10, 2002.
- [Data mining aims at national security.](#) *Federal Computer Week*, March 4, 2002.

FOIA Documents

Documents obtained by EPIC through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

- **NEW** Letters to contractors approving/rejecting funding for TIA projects, including names of companies and proposal titles. Available for download in four parts:
 - [\[Part 1: PDF, 728 KB\]](#)
 - [\[Part 2: PDF, 872 KB\]](#)
 - [\[Part 3: PDF, 688 KB\]](#)
 - [\[Part 4: PDF, 476 KB\]](#)

EPIC has also made available an [analysis of these documents](#), as well as a [table of approved contractors](#).

- "[Security with Privacy](#)" (PDF, 840K). Defense Department study, released in December 2002.

Resources

- [Materials](#) from EPIC's November 2002 briefing on TIA.
- [EPIC's Profiling page](#)
- [EPIC's National ID page](#)
- [EPIC's Biometrics page](#)
- [EPIC's Passenger Profiling page](#)
- Humorous [Flash animation on TIA](#), from cartoonist Mark Fiore.

Previous News

- **Senator Harkin Calls for Hearings on TIA.** Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) sent a [letter](#) to Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI), requesting that hearings be held on TIA and Admiral Poindexter's role in developing the project. He called on Poindexter to testify before Congress. (Jan. 13)
- **Senators Pose Data Mining Questions to Ashcroft.** In a [seven-page letter](#) (PDF) to Attorney General John Ashcroft, three members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have asked for detailed information on "current 'data mining' operations, practices and policies at the Department of Justice." The request includes information concerning DOJ involvement in the controversial Total Information Awareness project at the Defense Department. For examples of the types of information available to the government in private sector databases, see EPIC's [Public Records and Privacy](#) and [Profiling and Privacy](#) pages. (Jan. 13)
- **Pentagon Makes Incomplete Response to TIA FOIA Request.** After EPIC filed

[suit](#) (PDF) challenging its failure to release documents about the controversial "Total Information Awareness" program, the Defense Department has provided one document – a study titled "[Security with Privacy](#)" (PDF, 840K). The study recommends more DoD research on privacy, but does not address policy issues and states that it is "not a review of Total Information Awareness." (Dec. 19)

- **Sen. Schumer Urges Rumsfeld to Find Replacement for Poindexter.** The New York Daily News [reports](#) that Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) has written to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, asking him to find a replacement for Admiral John Poindexter, who currently heads the Total Information Awareness program. "If we need a big brother, John Poindexter is the last guy on the list that I would choose," said Senator Schumer on ABC's *This Week*. (Nov. 26)
- **EPIC Holds Briefing on Total Information Awareness.** EPIC held a briefing at the National Press Club today on [Total Information Awareness](#) and the civil liberties implications of the Homeland Security Act. Speakers included EPIC's Executive Director Marc Rotenberg and General Counsel David Sobel; Katie Corrigan, ACLU; and Steven Aftergood, Federation of American Scientists. For more information, see the [briefing materials](#). (Nov. 25)
- **Total Cost of TIA: \$240 Million in FY 2001-2003.** Contrary to a [statement](#) of a Defense Department spokesperson that the TIA budget is \$10 million, [DARPA documents](#) show that it is \$240 million for fiscal years 2001-2003. The TIA system, in fact, consists of several related programs unaccounted for by the official. The budget states that: "The primary goal of TIA is the assured transition of a system-level prototype that integrates technology and components developed in other DARPA programs including Genoa, Genoa-II, TIDES, Genisys, EELD, WAE, HID, and Bio-Surveillance." (p. 273). (Nov. 25)
- **Rep. Arme y: Homeland Security Bill Does not Authorize TIA.** Communications Daily reports that Majority Leader Dick Arme y (R-TX) said that the Homeland Security Bill "...does not authorize, fund or move into the department anything like it (Total Information Awareness)." He further stated that the use of data mining tools in the bill are "...intended solely to authorize the use of advanced techniques to sift through existing intelligence data, not to open a new method of intruding lawful, everyday transactions of American citizens." (Nov. 25)
- **Sen. Grassley Calls for Inspector General to Review TIA.** The Boston Globe [reports](#) that Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) has instructed the Inspector General of the Defense Department to review the TIA system. In a letter to the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, Grassley wrote "I am at a loss to understand why DoD resources are being spent on research for domestic law enforcement." (Nov. 22)

- **DARPA Ends Consideration of eDNA Project.** The New York Times [reports](#) that DARPA considered but decided not to pursue a plan to uniquely identify Web users through tying their communications to biometric identifiers. The eDNA proposal read: "We envisage that all network and client resources will maintain traces of user eDNA so that the user can be uniquely identified as having visited a Web site, having started a process or having sent a packet." (Nov. 22)
- **EPIC Requests DARPA Documents on TIA.** EPIC filed an expedited FOIA request today seeking DARPA records on what modifications TIA might make to any existing legal, statutory and regulatory frameworks concerning governmental access to and use of transactional and other records about individuals. The request also sought records concerning the potential privacy and civil liberties implications of the activities proposed for the TIA project. (Nov. 21)
- **Sen. Feinstein Calls for Legislation to Protect Against TIA.** The San Jose Mercury News [reports](#) that Senator Feinstein (D-CA) plans to introduce legislation to ensure that the Total Information Awareness project does not infringe on the privacy rights of Americans. "This is a panoply, which isn't carefully conscribed and controlled, for a George Orwell America," Feinstein told the Mercury News. "And I don't think the American people are ready for that by a long shot." (Nov. 20)
- **Senator Lieberman Limits Homeland Security Department Development of TIA.** Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) inserted an [explanatory paragraph](#) into the Congressional Record with passage of the Homeland Security Act that limits the new Department of Homeland Security from adopting or replicating TIA. The statement reads: "Nothing in this legislation should be construed as requiring or encouraging HSARPA (Homeland Security Advanced Research Projects Agency) to adopt or replicate any specific programs within DARPA, such as the Total Information Awareness Program, or as conferring HSARPA with any additional authority to overcome privacy laws when developing technologies for information-collection." Cong. Rec. S11412 (2002). (Nov. 19)
- **Sen. Nelson Questions TIA System.** Senator Nelson (D-FL) issued a [statement](#) on TIA announcing that he would scrutinize the system. He said, "I have a serious concern about whether this type of program, called Total Information Awareness, can be used responsibly...I intend to advocate that Congress and the Senate Armed Services Committee vigorously oversee this program to ensure there is no abuse of law-abiding individuals' privacy." Cong. Rec. S11250 (2002). (Nov. 18)
- **Groups Urge Senate to Stop Total Information Awareness.** In an open [letter](#) over 30 civil liberties groups urged Senators Thomas Daschle (D-SD) and Trent Lott (R-MS) to amend the Homeland Security Act to stop further development of the Total Information Awareness (TIA) program. (Nov. 18)

- **Leading Newspapers Blast Defense Dept. Surveillance Project.** Newspapers across the country are opposing the Department of Defense's [Total Information Awareness](#) (TIA) project. The New York Times [said](#) today that "Congress should shut down the program pending a thorough investigation." Earlier the Washington Post [wrote](#) "the defense secretary should appoint an outside committee to oversee it before it proceeds." For more information, see [EPIC's TIA Page](#). (Nov. 18)
- **New Total Information Awareness Details.** EPIC has obtained the [system description](#) (PDF, 4.5 MB) for the Total Information Awareness (TIA) Program. The document describes an elaborate system of human identification and surveillance. EPIC is pursuing a FOIA lawsuit against the Department of Defense to obtain further information about the TIA Program. (Nov. 15)
- **Poindexter's History Includes Attempt to Centralize Computer Control at NSA.** As National Security Adviser, Admiral Poindexter was involved with a controversial Reagan administration initiative in 1984 known as National Security Decision Directive, [NSDD 145](#). NSDD-145 gave the National Security Agency (NSA) control over security for all government computer systems containing "sensitive but unclassified" information. This was followed by a second directive issued by Poindexter that extended military authority over all computer and communications security for the federal government and private industry. The Computer Security Act, passed by Congress in 1987, reestablished authority for computer security policy at the National Institute for Standards & Technology. For more information see EPIC's [Computer Security Act page](#).

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